

2/19/73

Hon. Edward A. Haggerty, Jr.
7015 Memphis
New Orleans, La.

Dear Judge Haggerty,

One of the very few compensations from reading that verbose vindictiveness, James Kirkwood's American Grotesque, was learning that a judge can hold his own opinions in a publicized case and still preside impartially. My congratulations!

It is what I learned of you that prompts this letter that I ask you to hold in confidence, for I actually seek your advice. You see, I am absolutely convinced that you are correct in saying that Shaw lied under oath. Now that the Supreme Court has thrown out the perjury charge against Shaw, there remains the civil suit.

When I was in New Orleans a year ago November I met with Sal Panzeca for about an hour. I told him I hoped they'd drop that suit because I was so certain that Shaw had perjured himself, in ways not charged and no less material, and that he was not alone in committing perjury. Sal, of course, kept after me to tell him the nature of the perjury. I was torn between telling him and not telling him, because I don't want the innocent to suffer any more than Sal does. I compromised by telling him of one of the two other false swearings I believe to be perjury. It addresses his Clinton alibi. He and Cobb both swore that Shaw was indispensable and that Cobb was distraught when Shaw decided to retire. Rubbish! Cobb, personally, fired him. My information comes from one who was there.

Perhaps I should explain that I never conceived Shaw in the role in which Garrison cast him. I assumed Garrison knew what he was doing. When I investigated in New Orleans I had and pursued other interests, never investigating Shaw. However, in the course of my work, I could not help but stumble upon probative information and witnesses who did have knowledge of Shaw.

I don't really think that this civil suit is to get revenge from Garrison in the form of damages. Shaw got his vindication from the jury and Garrison doesn't have that kind of money. So, I conclude the real purpose is to get money from the three rick men.

I was to have been Jim's expert on the Warren Commission and FBI materials during the trial. I was in New Orleans when the jury selection began. It was then, for the first time, that I learned the prosecution's theory of the case and the extent of its evidence. I could not agree with this and with a few other things. I told Oser and Alford that they would lose and why and I was right. Jim does not accept this kind of thing easily, and he doesn't take kindly to being wrong. He also was surrounded by a bunch of self-seekers who did enjoy his trust simply because they were sycophants. I refer to others than his staff. From these and other things, relations between Jim and me deteriorated to the point where he did not respond to letters and did not return what he borrowed from me. I guess he also took offense at my detaching myself so much from the trial I never once entered the court room and left New Orleans before the trial was over.

To say that I did not see Shaw as Jim did is not to say that I did not see him not part of the story at all. I am still not persuaded, for example, that he was not Clay Bertrand and in November 1967 Dean Andrews told me he was. The FBI told Ramsey Clark that he was. That is why Clark said what he did when he left the hearing on his nomination. My source on this is unimpeachable and anti-Garrison. The FBI did investigate this. I have some of the FBI reports on it, more than I published. There is little doubt that

Regis Kennedy dissembled on this when he was a witness, for I have his reports which tell part of the truth, and that is that he did learn of the existence of Clay Bertrand from one who knew him by that name. Among other things, this means that "ean did not make the name up. (In fact, it has a literary derivation.)ean is not the literary type.)

You show more understanding of what Jim had in mind than I've seen or heard from anyone else in this interview with Kirkwood, who shows less understanding than anyone who has written on the subject. One of the results is that Jim never really conducted anything that could be called a real Shaw investigation. In part this is because the training and experience of the average good police investigator and assistant district attorney does not equip him for this kind of investigation. There are other reasons, too. So there were facets of which Jim was totally unaware. Even when I learned of these in the course of other work and gave them to Jim, he never carried them further. If I can't pretend to understand this, I know it is fact, have to learn from it, and am inhibited by it. In one case where Jim ordered an investigation, the results were given to him as negative whereas I conducted my own investigation, it turned out solidly positive, and I have two taped interviews to prove it --and that Shaw did perjure himself other than as Jim charged in such haste.

After the Rault fire, worried that these men of means would become victims of what I regard as good intentions, I wrote Rault about some of the foregoing. I never got an answer and my letter was not returned. I don't know him or the other two and never met any of them. When I got no response at all from Rault, with so much involved, I assumed that either some kind of deal was in the works or that Jim discouraged interest when he was consulted. Jim has his own and a special kind of ego, without which he could not have dared some of the things he has undertaken. I don't think he will acknowledge, even to himself, his deficiencies in his assassination "probe", which never got off the ground. (Even the medical stuff he used at the trial was mine, and I think he harbors secret resentment over that. Finck was not upset by lack of experience under cross-examination. He was caught and he knew it, more than Oser, who did well under the circumstances, was able to show.) Whatever Rault's reason for not responding, it has discouraged writing to Robertson or Shilstone. So, I don't know if I should make any other attempts and I am worried about miscarriages of justice.

Kirkwood says the obvious in saying that one of the results of the Shaw trial was to undermine acceptability of any criticism of the Warren Report, which leaves the assassination entirely unsolved. If Shaw wins his civil suit, truth will be buried even deeper. And, of course, these rich men may be victimized.

The sincerity of your interest seems clear to me in Kirkwood's interview. Thus I write to ask if there is any advice you can give me. You know the kind of meat-grinder into which one can walk. I do not want that to happen to me. You might, in fact, find some personal interest in other of my work unknown to Jim. I got what the government was suppressing about Ferrie, from the government and from private sources, only to run into opposition from Jim's staff in my efforts to carry this forward in New Orleans. Ferrie was not unknown to the vice squad, generally and personally. This led to perjury before the Warren Commission, one of several New Orleans cases of this.

What I am also saying is that there really is a major New Orleans aspect to the story of the JFK assassination, that Jim failed in his efforts to do something about it, that I have developed fairly much of it, and now see no real prospect of doing anything with it, much as it would be a kind of vindication of New Orleans and of Jim. Jim's ego makes it impossible to do anything about this with him. Incidentally, I share the general view of his unusual endowments and still respect them, regardless of the disagreements we have had. So, I would welcome hearing from you and do hope that you can give me good advice. I feel I need it.

Sincerely,